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## Acronym List

ACPC	Area Civil Protection Committees
AEDO	Agriculture Extension District Officer
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CAHW	Community Animal Health Workers
CBM	Community Based Management
CCFLS	Community Complimentary Feeding and Learning Sessions
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
DCPC	District Civil Protection Committee
DCT	District Coordinating Team
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
FFA	Food for Asset
FFP	Food for Peace
FY	Financial Year
GMP	Growth Monitoring
HA	Hectare
HP	Health Promoter
HSA	Health Surveillance Assistant
KG	Kilogram
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MT	Metric Tonnes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODF	Open Defecation Free
OFSP	Orange Flesh Sweet Potatoes
PCI	Project Concern International
Q4	Quarter 4
RMNCH	Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Child Health
TA	Traditional Authority
TLC	Total Land Care
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US\$	United States Dollars
VCPC	Village Civil Protection Committees
VDC	Village Development Committees
VNRMC	Village Natural Resource Management Committees
VO	Vegetable Oil
WASH	Water and sanitation Hygiene
WE/VSL	Women Empowered/Village Savings and Loans
WPC	Water Point Committee

## I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW TABLE

<b>Geographic Focus:</b> Balaka and Machinga Districts of Malawi
<b>Program Goal:</b> Improved food security among vulnerable households
<p><b>Purpose 1:</b> Increased food and income from agricultural and non-agricultural activities</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 1.1:</b> Increased sustainable nutrition friendly and market oriented agriculture production</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 1.2:</b> Increased agricultural and non-agricultural sales</p>
<p><b>Purpose 2:</b> Improved health and nutrition of pregnant/lactating women and children under five</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 2.1:</b> Improved nutrition and health practices</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 2.2:</b> Increased utilization of reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health prevention and treatment services</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 2.3:</b> Increased utilization of hygiene, sanitation and water facilities</p>
<p><b>Purpose 3:</b> Improve capacity to prepare for, manage and respond to shocks</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 3.1:</b> Improved community and household assets for disaster mitigation</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 3.2:</b> Improved institutional support of Disaster Risk Management (DRM) structures at all levels</p> <p><b>Sub-Purpose 3.3:</b> Enhanced community empowerment in managing disasters</p>
<b>Cross Cutting Themes:</b> Gender, Local Capacity Strengthening, M&E and Environment
<p><b>Target Beneficiaries (Disaggregated by Program Element and by Fiscal Year):</b></p> <p>Program Element 1 (Agricultural Sector Capacity): 36,929 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 2 (Maternal and Child Health): 103,165 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 3 (Family Planning and Reproductive Health): 50,701 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 4 (Water Supply and Sanitation): 51,497 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 5 (Nutrition): 240,225 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 6 (Capacity Building, Preparedness, Planning): 27,125 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 7 (Social Assistance): 9,310 beneficiaries (LOA)</p> <p>Program Element 8 (Natural Resources and Biodiversity): 32,542 beneficiaries (LOA)</p>
<p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p> <p><b>PCI (Prime Agency):</b> PCI has overall responsibility for program management, technical leadership, and implementation, financial and regulatory oversight, project M&amp;E, coordination with partner organizations, and reporting to and liaising with USAID. In addition, PCI leads all commodity management, logistics and implementation of all activities in Balaka.</p>

**Emmanuel International (Core Implementing Partner):** EI leads implementation of all activities in Machinga with technical support and management oversight from PCI.

**Agricane (Technical Implementing Partner):** Agricane is responsible for developing and implementing conservation agriculture and irrigation interventions and providing technical support for agricultural activities.

## II. OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

Malawi has declared a state of emergency due to the El-Nino situation and the food shortage crisis remained as the major concern of all key stakeholders involved in food security, including NJIRA, over the last quarter. Njira hosted a team from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The objective of both visits was to understand how the *El-Nino situation has impacted* on household food security situation in Malawi. The Njira consortium demonstrated how we accelerated the delivery of solutions to address the deepening food and income insecurity. PCI and partners distributed Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato vines, accelerated development of irrigation sites, increased coverage and reach of the livestock fairs, facilitated the Food For Asset distribution, distributed multi-vitamin to pregnant and lactating mothers as well as children below five years old and continue to promote both short and long term measures to support recovery from the shock of the dry spells. A total of 9,696 hh (about 53,328 people) benefited from the combination of immediate support. In addition, Njira facilitated the vaccination of 97,691 chicken against Newcastle disease, to protect the productive assets of the poor.

To support more beneficiaries, PCI submitted an emergency-focused agricultural recovery proposal to OFDA, a concept note to expand FFA activities through additional resources from FFP/ USAID. The OFDA submission "Malawi Emergency Response in Tandem" (MERIT) has been approved for a total funding value of \$995,690 covering a twelve month period, starting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2016. MERIT will complement Njira activities by increasing access to improved seed, enhancing capacity in post-harvest handling, and rehabilitating non-functional boreholes. PCI awaits feedback on the concept note submitted to FFP/USAID. As the lean season advances, the Njira team is refining the monthly data collection tools to improve our ability in monitoring and analysis of the changes in food access and availability in Balaka and Machinga more closely.

It is amazing that the Njira team has turned things around and reached such an enormous scale in just the last six months of operation. The pace of implementation and quality of engagement with communities has tremendously improved because of improved mobility service delivery structure. Our geographic and beneficiary coverage is expanding and the program registered 49 additional care groups and established a total of 288 WE/VSL in the last quarter.

During the reporting period, Njira worked closely with the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) and supported the development of the National Disaster Risk Management Manual. DoDMA appreciated the support and launched the manual in the 2016 National Disaster Risk Management Platform held May 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 under the theme "Building resilience through recovery and risk reduction". Similarly, Njira coordinated and supported training of the Health Surveillance Assistants (HAS), Agriculture extension staff and

Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) in various relevant modules to facilitate the service delivery at the community level.

As we transition in to the fourth quarter, the accelerated implementation will continue with enhanced quality of synergy and tailoring of interventions according to the Njira “Theory of change”. So far the acceleration was focused on the “Learning Villages” but we shall develop a cluster approach to ensure progressive coverage of the 791 villages (489 in Machinga and 302 in Balaka). We shall pay more attention to monitoring the nutritional status of children, complete the risk mapping, accelerate the registration of producer groups, reach more households with livestock, develop tools for “Gender mainstreaming” and roll out the designation of “Gender champions” in all Njira platforms (Care groups, WE/VSL, Producer groups, Marketing groups).

### **Key updates:**

- PCI signed a partnership agreement with Total Land Care (TLC) and agricultural activities began in the field. TLC brings technical expertise and rich experience in Conservation Agriculture (CA) and Natural Resource Management which includes the promotion of energy saving cooking stoves and CA farming techniques.
- During this reporting period, PCI’s new Njira Chief of Party (COP), Mr. Michael Ghebrab, joined the team and is working from the Project Management Unit in Zomba.
- PCI’s Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. George Guimaraes, visited Malawi in May 2016. In addition to George’s visit, Jerome Sigamani, PCI’s Senior Director for Field Operations travelled to Malawi for one week to support the on-boarding of the new Chief of Party for Njira. During both visits, the senior Headquarters staff interacted with project beneficiaries as well as conducted meetings with PCI’s in-country Senior Leadership Team and consortium partners, highlighting the importance of accelerating project activities, promoting a culture of positive performance, and maintaining standards of quality and accountability as the project scales up.

## **III. PERFORMANCE UPDATES FROM FY16 Q3**

### **Purpose 1: Increased Income from Agricultural and Non-agricultural Activities** **Agriculture**

*Conservation Agriculture (CA):* In FY16, Njira targeted 4,616 farmers to adopt improved cultural practices which includes conservation agriculture. Njira established 84 conservation agriculture demonstration sites one in each of the 84 GVHs and a total of 532 farmers (304 males and 228 females) practiced conservation agriculture so far. In this reporting period Njira finalized and signed the sub-agreement with the Total Land Care (TLC). TLC brings the expertise required for promotion of CA. As part of CA scale up, 82 lead farmers (63 M and 19 F) were taken for a successful exchange visit to learn from TLC’s conservation sites in Sharpe Valley and Golomoti. Following the cross learning visit TLC rolled out CA Training of Trainers (ToT) to 16 (6F and 10 M) Project staff and government officers. Njira program

established 10 demonstration sites in the learning villages with the involvement of the field staff and farmers in the practical sessions as outlined in the CA National Guidelines. The project, also conducted 12 field days to facilitate technology dissemination at the demonstration sites with the participation of 817 farmers (261 M and 556 F). The first 6 days focused on physiological maturity of maize while the subsequent 6 days addressed post-harvest handling. In view of climatic changes affecting the country, most farmers committed to practice the CA during FY17 Agriculture season.

*Orange Flesh Sweet Potato (OFSP) production:* Njira Project assisted 7,520 families with OFSP against FY 16 set target of 468 households to be targeted with improved crop planting material. Following the El-Nino induced crop failure in Balaka and Machinga Districts and much of Southern Region, Njira, using USD exchange rate gains, increased the number of beneficiaries targeted with planting material in order to bridge the hunger gap and protect household productive assets. The support consisted of 22,560 bundles of vines with mass of 4 kg each and an estimated area of 1,128 hectares was planted. It is estimated that the vines will yield approximately 20,304 tons of sweet potatoes at harvest period.

*Producer Groups Formation* The Njira beneficiary targeting requires establishing firm bases for tailoring interventions to specific groups based on wealth ranking and agro-ecological zone among other things. Connected with the producer groups are other program elements under purpose one, including irrigation, agribusiness, livestock support and WE/VSL. With emphasis on acceleration and in anticipation of the main rain season in Q-1 of the next financial year, the need to revitalize the agriculture extension strategy became essential. Now that, the project has improved mobility, completing the wealth ranking exercise will accelerate the registration of 800 groups (an average of 15 members each) in Q-4. The wealth ranking and clustering of villages by agro-ecological zone will enable Njira to improve on tailoring of interventions according to socio-economic and agro-ecological conditions.

#### *Bio-fortified bean seed multiplication*

The bio-fortified bean seed multiplication failed due to El-Nino. The seed multiplication was part of the collaboration Njira established with Malawi Improved Seed Systems & Technologies (MISST) and we experienced 100% crop failure due to the dry spell and pest attack. The result has been reported to MISST and they shared the same with USAID. In the future Njira will be more selective in targeting farmers with treadle pumps and irrigation for seed multiplication activities so they are able to maintain the crop even if a dry spell occurs.

*Promotion of Permaculture Gardens:* Njira organized exposure visits to Kusamala Institute of Agriculture and Ecology for 30 lead mothers to initiate the promotion of permaculture gardening in the project area. Currently the lead mothers are conducting permaculture demonstrations in their Care groups CGs to allow members to learn and adopt the technology to further scale up the adoption of permaculture kitchen gardens.

*Fruit Production:* Fruits play a vital role in provision of essential vitamins and minerals for healthy living of households. Fruit trees are a source of income for a household and they can also provide vital nourishment at a time of crop failure, because they can easily survive the prolonged dry spells which affect other food crops. Njira distributed Mango and Citrus fruits seedlings to households participating in the CGs. During this reporting period 3,000 seedlings were distributed benefitting 3,579 CG beneficiaries in Machinga and Balaka Districts. As a

way of sustaining seedling production, five fruit tree seedling nurseries and mother orchards have been established in learning villages and 11 village farm managers are going to be trained in grafting in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

*Irrigation Development:* During this reporting period Njira started implementation of irrigation farming. Following the conditional approval of the IEE by USAID, Njira mobilized quickly and started site development work immediately. The project has so far distributed 259 treadle pumps benefiting 1,221 households (720 M and 501 F) in both Machinga and Balaka. The Project is very much in target to developing 112 Ha against FY 16 target of 93 Ha.

### ***Livestock***

*Promotion of chicken, goat and pigeon value chains:* In the quarter under review, 150 additional members (32 M and 118 F) of the 2,366 beneficiaries targeted for FY 16 were trained. Cumulatively, 810 beneficiaries have been trained in FY 16.

Furthermore, in Q3 of FY16, a total of 416 beneficiaries (102 M and 314 F) received livestock support, out of which 154 HHs received four female goats each, 163 HHs received five chickens each and 99 HHs received a pair of pigeons each for multiplication through six Livestock Fairs. Rearing pigeons for sale and food is an emerging phenomenon and pigeons were in short supply during the fairs. Hence, 132 trained beneficiaries did not receive their pigeons. These beneficiaries will receive their pigeons in early Q4 of FY 16, as the pigeons suppliers have already been registered with Njira Project. Cumulatively, 519 beneficiaries have received livestock packages against an FY16 target of 2,366 livestock beneficiaries. All livestock distributed during the fairs were supplied by 539 livestock keepers within Njira targeted communities. In total, they have realized US\$29,740 from sale of their livestock

To promote the improvement of the local breed of Chicken and goats, the procurement of Black Australorps and Boer Bucks is in advanced stages and distribution will be completed in Q4.

In this quarter PCI and the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development (DAHLD) signed an agreement to train 33 Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs). The packaging and harmonization of the training material has been completed and the actual training of CAWHs is scheduled for next quarter.

*New Castle Disease Vaccination:* The Njira Project in coordination with the Department of Animal Health and Livestock Development staff promoted formation of community Newcastle Clubs (Chitopa Clubs) to mobilize poultry producers to vaccinate their birds. The mobilization was done by Njira supported CAWHs. A total of 97,691 chicken (64,895 in Machinga; 32,796 in Balaka) were vaccinated against Newcastle disease.

### ***Agribusiness***

*Rapid market analysis:* As a follow-up on the End Market Analysis report, completed with PCI agribusiness staff and CNFA, 22 frontline staff (3 F and 19 M) from the government and Njira were trained through a Training of Trainers (ToT) methodology which included instruction on the implementation of End Market Analysis recommendations, rollout of the project's agribusiness strategy and implementation plans for goat, pigeon, cowpeas and pigeon pea value



chains. The trainers will train 159 agribusiness lead farmers and contact farmers (i.e. 99 agribusiness lead farmers, 60 contact farmers) starting from September 2016.

*Linking farmers to buyers:* The agribusiness sector linked Njira beneficiary farmers to markets to sell their cowpea harvests. Through this activity, 401 beneficiary farmers (194 M and 207 F) collectively sold 15 Metric Tons of dried cowpeas in the six designated market aggregation centres at a premium price. The local price at the time of sale was MK330/Kg and Njira facilitated prices averaging between MK425/Kg and MK430/Kg for cowpeas. Farmers earned a total sum of US\$9,059.16 from the collective with minimum sales of MK850.00 and maximum sales of MK55, 000 per farmer.

Table 1: Cowpeas Volume Sold Through Collective Marketing

TA	# of Farmers			Volume Sold (MT)	Unit Price (US\$/KG)	Amount (US\$)
	M	F	Total			
Sawali	68	84	152	3.6	0.60	2,154.93
Kachenga	126	123	249	11.4	0.61	6,904.23
Totals	194	207	401	15		9,059.16

*Crop estimates for 2015/16 growing season:* The sector also started conducting 2015/16 crop harvest estimate in some TAs. In TA Nyambi-Machinga, about 33.021MT of pigeon peas from 1,116 farmers (287 M and 829 F) and 7.975MT of groundnuts from 17 farmers (10 M and & F) is being aggregated for collective marketing. The project is still conducting sensitization meeting targeting 1,641 farmers (1,018 F and 623 M) and the overall volume of commodities to be traded is expected to rise.

*Organizing farmer in marketing groups:* In the next quarter, the sector will conduct the Participatory Community Assessment in order to reorganize the producer and marketing groups to enhance functionality by grouping households that belong to the same wealth category together (i.e. producer groups, clubs, associations and cooperatives). The results will assist agribusiness sector to select at least 67 progressive marketing groups and conduct tailored training services before facilitating market linkages with the private sector and business development services.

### **Women Empowered (WE) VSL**

*Group adoption and formation:* Njira formed/adopted 281 WE/VSL groups this quarter which is 99% of the quarter's target (290 groups); the cumulative total as of the end of this quarter was 458 groups and 132 groups will be formed or adopted in the final quarter of FY16 to reach the year's target of 590 groups. Regular supportive supervision to these groups indicate that, in general, groups are doing well in record keeping, meeting procedures, and active participation. Some areas for improvement include development of a comprehensive constitution, facilitation guide for effective social issues discussions, and improved securing of

cashboxes. Community Agents and Facilitators will continue supervising groups and attending refresher trainings to increase capacity.

*Njira Data Quality Assessment (DQA):* The WE/VSL team was involved in the April DQA because group record-keeping is an essential requirement of a high quality WE/VSL group. Weaknesses were found primarily in calculating cumulative savings totals, balancing the Social Fund, and completing individual loan sheets. These were addressed in the new Community Agents training and facilitators increased efforts in these areas during supportive supervision visits.

*WE/VSL Second Community Agent Cohort Initial Training:* Njira trained a total of 81 new Community Agents (59 F and 22 M) in April and May. The six day residential training introduced the WE methodology, protocol and data collection tools. As part of an ongoing collaboration, 11 PERFORM project staff attended these trainings in order to start forming WE/VSL groups in their project areas as a way to encourage income generating activities which are alternatives to charcoal making and other environmentally destructive businesses.

*Economic Activity Selection, Planning, and Management (EASPM) Training:* Njira accelerated basic business skill training to communities, particularly in Machinga as part of the capacity strengthening for agribusiness. 29 Community Agents (18 F and 11 M) were trained as trainers in Machinga involving the Government Community Development Agents as facilitators. Those trained will now train the groups in their areas. A similar training for Balaka is scheduled for July to train 50 Community Agents and the remaining 170 Community Agents starting in FY17

## **Purpose 2: Improved Health and Nutrition of Pregnant and Lactating Women and Children under Five**

### ***Nutrition***

*Training of Cluster Leaders and cluster women in maternal nutrition module:* During this quarter 1,009 Cluster Leaders and 10,064 Cluster Women were trained in the maternal nutrition module. Thus a total of 2,171 Cluster Leaders and 32,281 Cluster Women have been trained so far against a target of 3,180 Cluster Leaders and 38,160 Cluster women for FY'16. The objective of the training was to help Cluster Leaders and Cluster Women to understand the importance of good nutrition before, during and after pregnancy, and the relationship between maternal nutrition and pregnancy outcomes. Cluster Leaders and Cluster Women have undergone three out of seven module trainings covering: 1) Introduction to the Care Group (CG) approach; 2) Essential Hygiene Actions; and 3) Maternal Nutrition. The two remaining modules will be rolled out next quarter covering: 1) Maternal Care; 2) Newborn Care; 3) Infant and Young Child Feeding; and 4) Family Planning.

During the quarter under review, Njira trained Health Surveillance Assistants (HSAs) in CGs (6 M and 11 F), and in the maternal nutrition module (9 M and 27 F), adding up to a total of 53 people (15M, 38 F) trained. The training aimed to help HSAs understand the CGs and maternal nutrition in order to provide support to health promoters.

In addition to expanding CG training in the third quarter, 49 new CGs were formed in both districts, currently the project has formed 396 CGs against the annual target of 265 CGs. The Njira team conducted a joint assessment involving Integrated Nutrition in Value Chains (INVC) Feed the Future project in areas where INVC is working to register the new CGs.

*Community Complimentary Feeding and Learning Sessions:* This quarter Njira trained 72 Health Promoters (40 M and 32 F) in Community Complimentary Feeding and Learning Sessions (CCFLS) who in turn have trained 3,413 cluster leaders and have since rolled out CCFLS sessions with cluster women reaching 200 children under five (95 M and 105 F). The objective of the training-of-trainers was to help Health Promoters understand the CCFLS sessions in relation to increased access to diverse and nutritious foods, as well as provide them with the skills necessary to train cluster leaders. The cluster leaders in turn conducted CCFLS sessions with their respective groups of neighborhood women.

During the quarter under review, PCI also trained 187 HSAs (106 M and 81 F) and 32 *Ministry of Agriculture Extension Development Officers (AEDOs)* (26 M and 6 F) in CCFLS in order that they be able to support Health Promoters and cluster leaders. Following the training of the HSAs Cluster Leaders were oriented in the concept of CCFLS and they went on to conduct CCFLS sessions with cluster women. This led to under five children gaining an average of .64 kilograms in a period of twelve days

*Growth Monitoring and Promotion:* Njira trained 129 HSAs (71 M and 58 F) in the WHO's new Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) standards. The aim of the training-of-trainers was to equip HSAs with the skills necessary to conduct GMP as well as to be able to train and support CG volunteers to conduct GMP sessions.

*Distribution of Multivitamins:* A total of 585 beneficiaries (i.e. 67 pregnant women, 139 lactating women and 379 children between the ages of one and five years old) received multi-vitamins donated to Njira from Kirk Humanitarian in the third quarter of 2016. An additional 15,604 beneficiaries will be served in the upcoming quarter.

### ***Reproductive Maternal Neonatal and Child Health (RMNCH)***

*Maternal and Neonatal Care Modules:* In the period under review, PCI field and headquarter staff reviewed the maternal care modules and flip charts, in addition to the father group flip charts on maternal care, maternal nutrition, and newborn care to contextualize the content of the material to the Government of Malawi (GoM) standards. Fifteen (8 M and 7 F) professionals led by the Health Education Unit of the Ministry of Health also participated in the exercise.

*Training of health workers in Youth Friendly Health Services Training:* During the quarter, 22 health workers (11M and 11F) were trained in YFHS against FY16 target of 40 health workers in Balaka. The training aimed to build the capacity of health care workers and provide quality YFHS. Training for the remaining 20 health workers in Machinga will take place next quarter.

*Supportive supervision to Village Clinics:* Njira supported the Machinga District Hospital to provide supportive supervision to 34 village clinics and a total of 34 HSAs in Njira's catchment areas. Reports from the supervision visit revealed 17 HSAs (50%) of the 34 HSAs visited were not following standard guidelines in managing sick children. To address the gaps HSAs will

participate in mentorship sessions led by Medical Assistants of Health Centres where sick children are referred in the fourth quarter to improve their skills in managing sick children. to will mentor the HSAs.

### ***Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)***

***Community Based Management Training:*** This quarter, a total of 120 Water Point Committees (WPCs) were trained in Community Based Management (CBM) which equals 1,200 WPC members (744 F and 456 M). The aim of the training was to empower committee members to learn how to manage and sustain improved water sources (boreholes) by mobilizing their own resources. In addition, 120 village chiefs were also trained to garner their support to WPC members as they manage their water sources. To date, 2,580 WPC members have been trained, against a target of 4,800 WPC members for FY16. The CBM trainings will continue next quarter.

The Njira WASH team inspected a total of 48 WPCs in Balaka this quarter in collaboration with government extension workers. The purpose of the inspections were to continue providing technical support and to assess compliance to CMB. The findings include: 100% of WPCs had a constitution; 85% had a maintenance fund; 98% had an operation and maintenance plan; and 18% had sanitary issues (e.g. lack of soak away pit; apron with minor cracks; and/or noticeable stagnant water). The committees with sanitary issues were advised on how to take immediate corrective measures.

***Area Mechanics Training:*** 25 area mechanics (21M and 4F) were trained and certified by the Department of Water in major borehole maintenance/ repair and linked to WPCs for technical support such as proper care of the borehole pump and fixing of major borehole technical issues including: disconnected riser pipes, leaking in pipe joints or rising main, and perforated and cracked cylinders.

***Sanitary Survey:*** Njira facilitated the testing of 93 boreholes of which 27 (29%) were found to be contaminated with human/animal faecal coliforms in the range of 3-40cfu/100mls and 6-45cfu/100ml for Balaka and Machinga respectively. Subsequent to the testing, the project conducted a sanitary survey of all 27 boreholes that failed microbiological water quality assessment. The aim of the survey was to identify sources of contamination and eliminate them. The findings include: 96% of the contaminated boreholes had broken/cracked aprons which led to the contamination; 4% had stagnant water within the apron or along the drainage channel and therefore lacked a functional soak away pit. The WPCs are currently working on eliminating these risks by constructing new aprons and proper drainage systems as an immediate next step. The project initiated a District Coordinating Team (DCT) meeting to communicate results of the microbiological assessment to WASH stakeholders including government. The outcome of this meeting was an action plan and activities planned including the GoM: 1) Communicating the assessment results to the borehole users and provide information on how to make water safe before use i.e. use of chlorine/ water guard; boiling; and solar disinfection; 2) Conduct sanitary survey to establish sources of contamination and possibly eliminate them; 3) Disinfection of boreholes; and 4) Re-testing of the borehole water for no coliform unit per 100mls. PCI has completed the first and second activities and the third activity is ongoing.

*District Coordinating Team (DCT) Meetings:* Njira facilitated DCT meetings in Machinga and one in Balaka to update stakeholders on Njira's WASH progress, including disseminating results of microbiological water quality assessment conducted in the previous quarter. A total of 33 people (23 M and 10 F) participated. The DCT hailed Njira for taking the initiative to conduct the microbiological water quality assessments which is rarely done because the lack of testing kits. It should be noted that at the district level water quality monitoring team is absent. According to the Department of Water Development, water quality monitoring, especially microbiological and chemical analyses in water is done by the central water laboratory. The GoM has not decentralized this task because of the nature of work and the fact that it requires well qualified personnel and equipment with high sensitivity and specificity for quality purposes.

*WASH Campaigns:* Two WASH campaigns took place in this quarter against the set target of eight for FY16 for both Machinga and Balaka. A total of 446 people (296 M and 150 F) received WASH messages (e.g. consistent latrine use and handwashing). Njira is considering more creative ways of enhancing awareness on WASH. Remaining campaigns will be planned to take place at more creative times, such as on market days, in order to reach larger audiences.

*Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Training:* PCI trained a total of 30 Extension workers (23 M and 7 F) in CLTS to help in rolling out CLTS in Njira catchment areas.

A total of 42 villages were triggered in Machinga during the quarter under review. To date, 95 Villages have been triggered against the target of 235 for FY'16 representing an achievement of 33%. All triggered villages have developed their own WASH bylaws endorsing that every household must have a latrine, and anyone found defecating in the open to pay a fine of about \$3. In Balaka, all villages in the project impact area were already triggered by other organization before Njira came in. Thus the project, in Balaka, focus on post-triggering activities such village inspection/ ODF follow ups.

PCI subsequently inspected 72 villages for adherence to ODF in the quarter under review. On average, communities in Balaka measure 83% compliant, while those in Machinga register 69% compliant to ODF attainment.

### **Purpose 3: Improved Capacity to Prepare for, Manage, and Respond to Shocks**

*Participation in the 2016 National Disaster Risk Management Platform:* Njira sponsored and participated in the 2016 National Disaster Risk Management Platform held May 30<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2016 under the theme "Building resilience through recovery and risk reduction". During the conference, Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) presented the Njira supported National Disaster Risk Management Manual that was developed during the previous quarter. PCI also presented Njira project interventions and demonstrated how the interventions are helping in reducing disaster risk in targeted communities contributing towards resilience building. The conference was attended by over 210 people from government, local authorities, development partners, private sector, members of press, and academia. The conference was aimed at sharing best practices, progress, success stories, challenges, and lessons learnt in the implementation of recovery and resilience interventions in the country.

*Review Meeting and DRM Training:* Njira's Disaster Risk Management (DRM) team held a quarterly review meeting and training for staff June 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and representatives of

Machinga and Balaka District Civil Protection Committees (DCPCs). 18 participants were trained, including 9 from Machinga (2 women and 7 men), 7 from Balaka (3 women and 4 men), and 2 facilitators. The training focused on 5 core modules: 1) resource mobilization, 2) simulation exercise, 3) empowerment; 4) participation and, 5) Early Warning Systems (EWS). In addition, Njira finalized development of templates for Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPCs) DRM and contingency plans. These templates will help the targeted communities to develop community DRM and contingency plans.

*Safety nets to protect and develop productive assets:* This quarter, Njira registered 2,100 vulnerable households to participate in social safety nets designed to reinforce their livelihoods and coping mechanisms, protect and expand their productive assets, and at the same time develop community assets and build resilience. Out of the registered households, 1,800 vulnerable households participated in watershed development while the remaining 300 vulnerable households participated in feeder road rehabilitation. HHs received FFA rations for this work – please see more information on FFA on page 17 of the report for further details.

*Watershed Management Training and Development:* Following the watershed management training of trainers (ToT), which was conducted for Njira staff in the previous quarter by Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR)-India, Njira facilitated the formation and training of watershed committees in 6 out of the 10 targeted watershed sites. A total of 90 community members (43 M and 47 F) in Balaka and Machinga were trained in the following: watershed management conceptual understanding; participatory net planning; land use and possible treatment works and designing treatment options e.g. continuous contour trenches and water treatment works monitoring.

These community-based watershed committees are the prime implementers of the work and, with the support from Njira staff, they facilitated the rolling out of micro watershed development activities in 6 of the 10 targeted watershed sites in Machinga and Balaka. The 10 sites were selected based upon each area's relative level of threat to agricultural productivity, water availability, and disaster risk to communities. Currently, 640 hectares of the FY16 targeted 680 hectares of land is under treatment with a number of soil and water conservation techniques such as continuous contour trenches, check dams, stone bunds, water absorption trenches, and management of natural regenerate trees. Njira has also mobilized Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMCs) and VCPCs to construct fences for tree nurseries for afforestation in the targeted watershed sites. Njira through purpose 1 has already procured tree seeds to be distributed to the VNRMCs.

*Feeder Roads Rehabilitation and Project Teams Formation:* Njira, in collaboration with Balaka District Council's Public Works office, supported communities under Traditional Authorities (TAs) Sawali and Kachenga to rehabilitate and maintain dilapidated roads aimed at improving community access to better markets for their agricultural produce and also ease access to other community social services. The public works officials facilitated the formation and training of project teams comprising of 15 members in each team who are the prime implementers of road rehabilitation projects. To date, 300 vulnerable households supported the rehabilitation of 11.2 kilometers of FY16's targeted 35 kilometers. The remaining target will be accomplished in the next quarter.

*Rapid Food Security Assessments:* Njira conducts rapid food security situation assessment on a monthly basis. These assessments help PCI Malawi monitor food security and better understand community needs. During the reporting quarter, the results of the assessments

indicated a reduction in the number of months of food self-sufficiency among the households that participated in the assessments. The results also indicated an increase in the price of maize and other commodities from about MK7000.00/50Kgs (US\$9.72) bag at the time of harvest to about MK15000.00/50Kgs (US\$ 20.83) by end of June. This unusual increase is a result of poor yield in the 2015/2016 growing season due to El Niño induced drought. Njira utilizes the monthly findings to inform the planning and targeting of beneficiaries with complimentary interventions.

*ACPCs and DCPCs Meetings:* Njira facilitated an integrated meeting between Area Civil Protection Committees (ACPCs) and District Civil Protection Committee (DCPC) in Machinga, where representatives from all the 6 targeted ACPCs attended a DCPC meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016. This strategy was aimed at strengthening the link between ACPCs and DCPCs and also help to create long-term sustainability of capacity building efforts by developing a handover process to local government from the beginning of the project and building the capacity of local trainers at the area and district levels. The meeting helped to address the communication gaps that has existed within the DRM structure in the district as the ACPCs have not been involved in DRM interventions. A total of 35 participants (27 M and 8 F) attended the meeting.

*Capacity Building for VCPCs:* During this quarter, VCPC trainings were completed with the remaining 15 VCPs, with 233 total participants (154 M and 79 F). Cumulatively, all 84 VCPCs have been trained. Each trained VCPC is finalizing its disaster risk management and contingency plans with support from Njira staff and government extension workers.

*DRM Workshops:* Njira facilitated DRM workshops where groups of VCPCs were convened this quarter with their respective ACPCs to collaborate on DRM concepts and conduct dry-runs of activities that VCPCs implement in their communities. Workshops covered the following DRM topics: vulnerability and prioritization of threats, early warning, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery. The major topic that dominated the discussion was how to cope with the impact of El Niño. A total of 317 people (189 M and 128 F) comprising ACPCs and VCPCs members, local leaders, and representatives from the DCPC attended the meetings. During the sessions, CPCs were given the opportunity to question each other's accountability based on operational and reporting lines and also learn from each other on how they are implementing their DRM plans using available resources.

*Establishment and Operationalization of Ubwino Centres:* Njira has established 70 (40 in Machinga and 30 in Balaka) Ubwino Centres to date out of the original target of 84. Currently, all 70 Ubwino Centres are functional. The centres are equipped with rain gauges and trained on how to monitor, analyze and use the data. Njira continues to enhance the capacity of the centers to serve as early warning system hubs within the community.

*Installation of River Line Gauges:* Njira is facilitating the installation of river line gauges in 13 sites of flood-prone communities within Njira's targeted areas. The information collected from the 13 gauging stations will benefit all of the Njira communities. Currently, officials from the Department of Water Resources and Development are in the field installing the gauges. This initiative will help Njira targeted communities to prevent the impact of the anticipated La Niña weather conditions during the 2016/2017 season.

## Cross-Cutting Themes Achievements

### *Commodity Management and Logistics*

*Food for Asset (FFA) Registration, Ration cards printing:* FFA beneficiary registration was initiated in June 2016. The GPath system was used for capturing registration records, which were further verified with attendance registers to validate and check data quality. A total of 3,571 ration cards were printed from the system for the verified beneficiaries. Field facilitators will be distributing ration cards to the intended beneficiaries prior to the distribution in July 2016; rations will be distributed based on attendance in the attendance register.

*Distribution planning, recipient list printing and distributions:* The first FFA rations distribution was conducted in the month of April 2016. As of April 2016, Njira was able to distribute 66.71 MT to a total of 3,578 Households (HH) (PB 53.57 MT and VO 13.14 MT for 2,805 HH in Balaka and 773 HH in Machinga). Commodities were dispatched from Balaka warehouse to the distribution points in both districts based on approved distribution plans.

*Monthly warehouse inspections:* Regular warehouse monitoring has been undertaken in this quarter. Both planned and unplanned warehouse visits were arranged to do spot checks on the standards of warehousing. This has helped in maintaining the condition of the warehouses to ensure adherence to best practices in commodity management.

*On the Job Commodity accounting trainings using GPath system:* On the job training have been provided by Regional Commodity & IS Manager to the warehouse and logistics staff to establish automated GPath based commodity accounting and inventory reporting prior to the end of last quarter.

*FY17 commodity receipts preparations:* The commodity team has been preparing for the incoming FY17 shipment scheduled to start arriving from Beira, Mozambique to Blantyre warehouse in July 2016. The Commodity team has finalized contracts for Surveyors and C&F agents along with the local transporter contracts in the quarter under review. Procurement of warehouse maintenance and supplies have been also initiated. Frequent coordination meeting via teleconferencing have been maintained involving all key stakeholder to ensure smooth importation and operation.

*TOPS Commodity Management Tool Kit workshop:* The Regional Commodity Manager and Commodity Manager participated in the testing of the Commodity Management Tool Kit organized by TOPS in Durban, South Africa. Participants had an opportunity to review and provide inputs on the completeness, correctness, usability and clarity of the new tools developed by TOPS Project.

### **Gender**

*Dynamic Team Gender ToT Training:* The project conducted a community based training which took place in all 11 TA's targeting the dynamic teams in May 2016. This was a calculated effort to make sure gender issues are well integrated in all sectors. The training's objective was to enhance facilitators understanding on the use of gender sensitive messages and gender visioning processes. In total, the activity had 39 people (16 F and 23 M) participants.

*Gender ToT Training for Community Committee Representatives:* Njira conducted a one day gender Trainer of Trainers in every model village with community committee representatives



to enhance understanding on how gender relates to the Njira project. The committee members participated in trainings from different sectors. VDC, VCPC, WPC, Promoter, CG, Lead Farmer, Livestock and WE/VSL and Group Village Head. The number of people who participated in the training in total were 90 (37 F and 52 M) in Balaka and 233 (109 M and 124 F) in Machinga.

*Gender Community Verifications:* Verification meetings were conducted in Machinga and Balaka. Traditional leaders, religious leaders, Njira volunteers, village committee members from the Area Development Committees, Village Development Committees and Village Civil Protection Committee took part in the discussions, totaling 505 participants (263 M and 242 F). The objective was to provide feedback to the communities on the behavior aspirations that emanated from the Gender Analysis exercise. Subsequently all the communities endorsed the vision and expressed willingness to practice the behaviors Njira is promoting such as male involvement in ante-natal visits- men who escort their wife to hospital when they are pregnant during the first and last trimester as well as joint decision making on health and agriculture activities.

*Gender barrier breaking messages:* The project embarked on the development of gender modules and gender related messages with UBALÉ and government counterparts, including the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Health in June 2016. The modules and messages were developed focusing on the findings from the gender analysis and these messages shall be further refined to come up with a strategy and key messages to break the barriers and facilitate behavior change.

*Development of Gender Scope of Work:* A scope of work has been completed to engage the services of a local non-governmental organization (NGO) to provide capacity-building to the project, partner staff and community volunteers to promote proven “gender transformative” approaches with a focus on household-level power relations, with the goals of: (1) breaking gender-based barriers and empowering women to be decision-makers in maternal health and nutrition; (2) promoting joint decision-making on matters of child health and nutrition, and; (3) promoting joint decision-making among couples on savings and wealth generation opportunities. It is expected that the Local Sub grantee will be selected and engaged in the next quarter.

### ***Local Capacity Strengthening***

*Selection of Local WASH NGO:* During this reporting period, the Njira Team conducted interviews and selected the Local WASH Sub grantee. The process involved review of the technical proposals and assessment of the oral presentations which were conducted by potential Local NGOs. The process resulted in selection of Nkhadze Alive Youth Organization and Participatory Development Initiative. The two selected organizations were subjected to a Financial Management Health Check which aimed at understanding the financial systems of the organizations. The Health Check revealed that the two organizations are considered a “medium risk”. PCI will guide the sub-contractors to develop and implement an improvement

plan to strengthen areas identified with weaknesses and will be monitored and supported by PCI staff. PCI may also reduce the financial risk by reimbursing sub recipients upon receiving evidence of payment for the goods or services. It is anticipated that the WASH sub grantees will be engaged in the next quarter.

*Youth Adolescent Reproductive Health Local Sub grantees:* The Njira Project intends to contract two local Sub grantees to strengthen sexual reproductive health information and practices amongst adolescents in Machinga and Balaka districts. Solicitation of the two local sub grantees is currently underway. During this reporting period, Grass Root Soccer Organization was identified as one of the sub grantees to provide adolescent reproductive health support to the project. Njira is in the process of identifying the second sub grantee. It is anticipated that the process of selecting and contracting of the two local Sub grantees will be finalized in the next quarter.

*Manual for Managing Local Groups:* A manual titled “A Practical Guide to Managing Njira Groups” has been developed. The Manual has been developed for use by development facilitators, field extension workers and community leaders working in the Njira catchment areas. The manual will assist to streamline the project effective management of the groups within the catchment area.

### ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

*Assessments:* Njira continued with tailored approach to CG trainings during this reporting quarter. Barrier analysis on two behaviors including: Pregnant women attend at least 4 antenatal visits during pregnancy; and Mothers of children 48 hours old ensure that baby receives a postnatal consultation within 2 days of birth, was conducted in Machinga and Balaka. Results were used to inform the roll-out of RMNCH modules targeting CG volunteers for the 369 Njira supported CGs.

*Data Quality Assessment:* Data Quality Assurance (DQA) was conducted in April, 2016 in Balaka and Machinga to assess the quality and reliability of the M&E system for Njira. Five data quality standards were assessed including: Validity, Reliability, Timeliness, Precision and Integrity as outlined in the Njira M&E Plan DQA checklist and recommended procedures. Overall 97% of the verified data was accurately reported with source documentation available at source and district office level. Recommendations from the DQA assisted Njira implementing partners to address the strengths and weaknesses of the data quality requirements based on the Njira M&E Plan data quality standards. Action plans were developed with Njira implementing partners highlighting the key actions, responsibilities and timelines.

*M&E system update:* As part of M&E plan development, Njira received feedback from its Feb 2016 submission to FFP in June, on the revised M&E plan. Currently the M&E Plan is under review to incorporate the FFP feedback.

Additionally, Njira continued with registration of groups including producer groups, watershed groups and WE/VSL groups. Entry of registration data in G-path system is on-going during the registration exercise. The registration will enable Njira to properly track its targeted beneficiaries across the project interventions and eliminates double counting.

**IV. CHALLENGES DURING FY16 Q3**

<b>No</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.	Some Community Agents are still struggling with the quarterly WE/VSL data collection tools.	Facilitators re-train and mentor Community Agents to build their capacity.	The tool will be reviewed during field-based review meetings and refresher trainings.
2	Backlog of registration forms and data that needs to be entered in to the G-Path data base which is slowing us down from completing G-Path	Plan to hire additional temporary data entry clerks and supervisors to complete the backlog	Use of tablets for subsequent beneficiary registration to progressively digitize the beneficiary registration process
3	Some Community Agents have struggled to conduct community wealth ranking exercises	Facilitators accompany Community Agents during the exercises	This activity will be addressed and practiced in refresher trainings.
4	WE/VSL Groups challenge to have in-depth social issues discussions that results in an action plan.	This is an ongoing area for capacity building although more can be done to strengthen the Community Agents ability to help groups.	Additional Training materials will be developed and facilitation skills will be emphasized during refresher trainings.
5	In some cases, WE/VSL groups are failing to meet or failing to contribute shares. This may be a result of the drought and hunger situation.	Encouraging groups to continue meeting even if they reduce share values.	Will continue to monitor the situation.
6	Livestock sector continues to experience staffing challenges. The newly set target of reaching 11,076 households would require at least 7 dedicated livestock Facilitators to effectively deliver its mandate.	The needed additional resources have been included into FY 17 PREP	1 Coordinator has been recruited and once PREP is approved new Facilitators will be hired
7	Inadequate number of Water Monitoring Assistants (WMAs) to facilitate concurrent CBM trainings.	Formed clusters within the GVH as a training center/venue	10 Area Mechanics have been trained to provide technical support during CBM Trainings.

## V. PLANS FOR FY16 Q4

**Purpose 1:** Key activities include the following: Facilitation of the establishment of 11 fruit tree nurseries in the remaining learning villages; Training of Water Users Associations; Lead farmer training on CA; Establishing 84 Agroforestry nurseries; Setting up of 84 drought tolerant crop demonstration; Learning village community mobilization on CA; Upscaling of conservation agriculture; Establishing 280 permaculture kitchen demonstration gardens; Training CG members on permaculture techniques (Kusamala); Distributing 18 Boer bucks to 18 households and 1,100 Black Australorp 6week grower-chickens to 220 households ; 121 Black Australorp Breeder to 11 Model Breeders. Training of 33 CAHWs in animal health and livestock production; Conducting distribution of goats, chicken and pigeons to 1,766 beneficiaries; Mobilization of at least 1556HH to participate in livestock value chains; 33 CAHWs will undergo 3-weeks training at Mikolongwe Veterinary Station; Scaling up of vvaccination of chicken against Newcastle disease by introduction of Champion Livestock Farmers in the all villages; Conducting refresher trainings for first and second CA cohorts; Lives Changed Indices baseline survey implementation; EASPM TOT in Balaka and cascade trainings in both districts; Gender Integration/Male Engagement TOT by PCI's WE Gender Integration Technical Advisor; Supervision visits to both Community Agents and WE groups; Formation of new and adoption of existing groups

**Purpose 2:** Key activities include: Father group training in CG modules; Training of Health Promoters, HSAs, cluster leaders and women in maternal health and newborn care modules; Supporting Child Health days; Supervising households with growth faltering children referred to Supplemental Feeding Program(SFP); Linking families with children admitted at SFP or Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit with VSL groups, and/or CCFLS; Installation of 5,000 cook stoves; Providing refresher trainings in Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) to health center staff; Conducting supportive supervision for clinical services at health facility and community level using Quality Improvement Verification Checklists (QIVC); Conducting refresher trainings with HSAs in community based newborn care in Njira supported facilities; Conducting Community Case Management (CCM) supervisions to HSAs; Finalizing and rolling out the maternal and neonatal care modules; Finalizing the engagement process of local NGOs in working with youth; Linking youth to YFHS; Supporting health center and community service supportive supervision; Supporting maternal death surveillance activities in Njira supported areas; Conducting health services review meetings at facility; Conducting additional CBM trainings with WPCs; Conducting WASH Campaigns; Conducting village inspections to ten GVHs; TOT of extension workers in CLTS; Conducting local and natural leaders meetings; Conduct ODF verification exercise; Conducting microbiological water quality monitoring.

**Purpose 3:** Key activities include: VCPC trainings on simulations, EWS; DCPC Meeting; Quarterly review meetings; Training Project Committees; Conducting VCPC/ACPC interface meetings; Trainings of VCPCs and VDCs on gender and governance; Couples Workshop; Community dialogue with local and religious leaders; the community; Conducting ToT training with facilitators, promoters, lead farmers, Community Agents and CAHWs on gender

integration; Conducting Gender sensitization meetings using Theater for Development; GIS Mapping; Continuing watershed Development.

**Commodities:** The following are the priorities for the commodity team for the next quarter: Oversee coordination between DRM and ICT team for FFA beneficiary registration process; Distribution planning, logistics arrangements for FFA distribution; Planning for PREP FY 2017 and the El-Nino response proposal; Recruitment of additional distribution staff; Finalization of commodity operation plan.

**Gender:** Rollout of Njira Gender TOT (with UBALE), Njira Gender Advisor engagement in the FFP Gender Analysis Workshop in Washington, DC, WE VSL gender mainstreaming pilot as a component of the broader Njira strategy, submission of the gender analysis reports

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Knowledge Management:** Conduct refresher training for program staff in M&E systems, data collection tools; Conduct practical training on G-path operations and use for advisors and coordinators; Develop program quality assessment system for each purpose; Develop quarterly donor project reports/project bulletins; Develop Year 3 Annual Results Report; Develop Year 3 Detailed Implementation Plan (DIP)

## Annex 1 – Photo Gallery



*Farmers at Matola irrigation scheme*



*USAID-OFDA Team and Njira staff during a visit in Balaka*



*Farmers in a fruit trees nursery in TA Nkoola, Machinga*



*Farmers during learning visit at TLC Sites*



*Pipe layout at Chikumba irrigation scheme, Machinga*



*Treadle pump connection point, Machinga*





*Livestock beneficiaries with their goats in Kalembo, Balaka*



*Beneficiary farmers with their cowpeas during a collective marketing activity*



*Chairperson of WPC at Nandumbo Water Point*



*Lead Mothers of Talandira Care Group slicing orange fleshed sweet potatoes for flour making to be used in CCFLS*



*CCFLS in progress by Talandira Care Group, TA Nyambi, Machinga*



*CCFLS training for Care Group, TA Sawali, Balaka*





*Watershed treatment works at Simbota*



*Watershed treatment works at Simbota*



*Field based watershed management training in TA Kalembo, Balaka*



*Beneficiaries receiving their rations after Afforestation projects in TA Nyambi*



*Practical Stone band construction*



*Ubwino Centre construction in TA Ngokwe, Machinga*



## Annex 2 – Success Stories

### Connecting Men in Maternal and Child Health Care

Njira has established Father Groups (FGs) as a complementary platform to support and strengthen maternal health and nutrition social behavior change (SBC) among their families and communities.

In Traditional Authority Amidu, 27 year old Douglas Nyalira mobilizes men in his community to challenge the stereotype that caring for children is a task designated for women. A father of two children, Douglas has always shared the responsibility of taking care of the children with his wife. After learning about Care Groups (CGs) from his wife, Douglas decided to join a



Douglas Nyalira (left), Abdul Matola (right)

Father Group; one of Njira initiatives that target men in order to complement the efforts of the Care Groups in improving infant and young child feeding practices.

Through the Group, Douglas Nyalira said he has learned the importance of providing complimentary feeding practices, he further explained; “The training has enlightened me on the

*importance of joint decision making within the household.”*

As a member of the Father Groups he felt compelled to communicate this message to all the men in his community. His efforts were met with ridicule from some men, while resonating with others. One of the men the message resonated with is Abdul Matola, a father of three.

Both men now use community gatherings as a platform to advocate for gender-equitable attitudes as related to health and nutrition. Douglas takes it a step further and tries to break cultural barriers by speaking to women who are wary of speaking to other women about issues that concern men and channeling their concerns and messages to the community.

*‘I will continue to be ridiculed, I know that, but I also know that change takes time’*

*“I will continue to be ridiculed, I know that, but I also know that change takes time” – Douglas Nyalira.*

## Empowered Women, Empowered Communities

For nearly 12 years, the main borehole in TA Kalembo, GVH Nandumbo had been broken, and women had to walk more than 3 Kilometers to fetch water. In 2012, when the borehole was finally fixed, a group of men and women took on the responsibility of operating and maintaining the borehole, but they had received no formal training.

In October of 2015, the Community Based Management (CBM) initiative was rolled out as part of the Njira's initiative under Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) component. The aim of CBM is to equip communities with the necessary skills to manage water points on their own, and to link them to skilled persons within their community who can assist when borehole maintenances are beyond their skillset.

As part of the intervention, Njira helps communities establish water and sanitation committees comprised of members who are charged with operating and maintaining the borehole, promoting responsible usage of water points, and increasing awareness of water and sanitation issues. And while the committees are usually comprised of 40% men and 60% women, in Nandumbo the water committee is made up of exclusively women members. Ten WE/VSL members to be exact.

*"We kicked out the men in our group because they are not quick to take actions to rectify problem regarding the borehole. It's because they are not the ones fetching the water"* said one of the women.



*Nandumbo Water Point Committee*

To sustain the borehole, a monthly household levy of MK125 (\$0.15) is collected from 42 households and deposited into a community-managed bank account. From this borehole maintenance fund, money is withdrawn to implement other income generating activities. The committee has also started a community garden where papayas and various fruit trees are grown. The produce is then sold in the market and the proceeds are used to replenish the fund. One other

commitment that the committee took upon itself is assisting other women in starting kitchen gardens in their homes, to enable them to not only achieve food security but to generate income by selling the surplus in local markets.

When asked how they now repair the hand pump, a woman flashed a proud smile and responded with *"We don't have to rely on men to fix the small problems, we fix them ourselves, and if they are major issues then we seek the help of area mechanics in our community"*.

Njira has also trained 10 area mechanics in Balaka of which 2 serve the villages in TA Amidu.

## Women Empowered/Village Savings Groups: Changing Lives

Anne Frank, 28, a mother of one, started her fritters business two years ago but could not imagine that she would one day run a cross-border business. She started her fritters business to supplement her husband's income, and after selling fritters for some time with minimal benefits, she decided to join a WE/VSL group to increase her capital. She joined Chiyanjano group which was formed by 25 women around Nselema Trading Center in TA Kapoloma in Machinga.



Anne Frank with her son

After her first cycle of share-out, the time when each individual receives their earnings as a WE/VSL group shareholder, she received a substantial amount of money. The money was enough for her to venture into a new business. So she started a *Zitenje* – a piece of fabric that women wrap around their bodies - business, and realized that it was more profitable than selling fritters. Later, she decided to challenge the norms within her community, and joined a group of women who were going to outside the country after learning that the fabric was selling at more reasonable prices than in Malawi.

Her business grew quickly, and after one year, she has managed to buy her own piece of land, worth K150, 000.00 (US\$208) of which she says is a gift for her son.

*"I am happy that now I have managed to do my own business and excel in life which is very challenging for most women here in Machinga. Thanks to the WE/VSL group,*

*my life is simpler. I have bought enough household utensils and I can support my child when my husband is not there."* Said a visibly excited Anne.

*In WE/VSL, groups of 15-25 group members, about 90% of whom are women, come together weekly to pool their savings. The collective money is then loaned out to the group members on an individual basis as capital to invest in small businesses, buy food, seeds and other household items. The loans are paid back to the group at an agreed time with an agreed interest rate. The groups also discuss social issues that affect their community, take action to resolve common problems, and empower individuals through increased confidence, self-esteem, and leadership opportunities.*



## WE/VSL Group Women Learn to Read in Balaka

Chikondi WE/VSL group in Ndoya Village in Group Village Head (GVH) Kapalamula in Traditional Authority Msamala, Balaka District is one of the existing saving groups that has been adopted by the Njira project. This group has fully adopted PCI's Women Empowered (WE) VSL methodology. One unique aspect of this methodology is that it places equal importance on economic empowerment, through savings and loans, as well as social empowerment. The WE methodology aims to build group members' social capital through designated 'social issues discussions' and rotational leadership during each meeting.

Since the implementation of the social issue dialogue in weekly group meetings, Chikondi WE/VSL group realized that some members do not know how to read and write the local language of *Chichewa* nor in English. And the issue was tabled where the group agreed to send group representatives to present the issue to their traditional leader (Chief) for her awareness and support. Later the chief advised the members to enroll and start attending adult literacy classes at Chingeni Primary school which is 3km from Ndoya village. Currently the school through a Malawi Government initiative is offering Adult Literacy Classes at the school.



*A weekly WE/VSL group meeting*

At present 8 members of Chikondi WE/VSL group are attending adult literacy classes. The classes are held at 3:00pm Monday thru Friday but the group members attend only Monday through Wednesday since Thursday and Friday are the days they have dedicated for business as they look forward to increasing the household income.

*'In the past anything to do with signing, I used to thumb print, but now I am able to sign my name with my hand, and I am looking forward to becoming a WE/VSL group secretary in the future' -- Mary Mvula, Chikondi WE/VSL group member.*

The group acknowledged the importance of having social issues discussion during WE/VSL meetings noting that they have been encouraged to improve their lives more than they had in the past. Another member of the group who joined adult literacy classes narrated that *'I am glad our WE/VSL group encouraged me to attend adult literacy classes, and now I am able to write my name and other words, I am also able to read some Chichewa words.'*

The group members are proud to be part of a successful WE/VSL group, saying that they have now started to experience the benefits of the group in their lives and families through WE methodology particularly the aspect of social issue discussion.

*'In the past anything to do with signing, I used to thumb print, but now I am able to sign my name, and I am looking forward to becoming a WE/VSL group secretary in the near future'*